

T.A.R.G.E.T. Board Report October 2019

There are currently seven middle school students and five elementary students in the Holden R-III T.A.R.G.E.T. program. T.A.R.G.E.T. classes are held every Tuesday. The middle school students meet for 2½ hours in the morning in the middle school library, and elementary students meet for 2½ hours in the afternoon in the elementary building. Numbers of students by grade are:

- 2 in grade 4
- 3 in grade 5
- 3 in grade 6
- 2 in grade 7
- 2 in grade 8

Students participate in activities that promote critical and creative thinking skills. Most activities focus on the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy - analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Activities include but are not limited to:

Team Challenges – Students work as a team to complete tasks. Some tasks are verbal tasks, some are building tasks, and some are moving tasks. While the tasks differ in nature, the solutions must all come quickly. Teammates often have only a few minutes to discuss their plan and several more to implement it. This teaches them to communicate quickly, effectively, and without conflict. Every task requires students to think creatively, cooperate with one another, and communicate clearly in order to complete the given task. Tasks also help develop fluent, flexible thinking.

Weighing In – Current events are often used to allow students to formulate and express their individual opinions about the event being discussed. (Gifted students often have a strong interest in and knowledge of current events.)

Solve It Yourself Mysteries – Students are read a short mystery story. Using clues from the story and testimonies of individuals in the story students must determine the perpetrator of the crime, how the crime was committed, and the motive. (This is a favorite.)

Red Herrings – Using only questions that can be answered by yes or no, students determine the “back story” from 1-3 brief statements read to them. (This is another favorite.)

Critical Thinking Lessons – A variety of lessons are used to help students develop critical thinking skills.

Logic Puzzles – Students work to solve different types of logic puzzles that include toothpick puzzles, coin puzzles, sequencing puzzles, etc.

Weekly Vocabulary Activity - Each week students participate in a vocabulary building activity. The SAT vocabulary list is the primary source of words for the activities.

Middle school and elementary school students are learning the Future Problem Solving process this year. All of the students will participate in the first two practice problems. A team of four middle school students and a team of four elementary students will be chosen to write problem #3, the qualifying problem. This year's topics include:

- International Travel
- Sleep Patterns
- Gamification
- Living in Poverty

The T.A.R.G.E.T. class also offers students the opportunity to study topics that are of interest to them. Students choose topics they personally want to study. They complete Action Plans to help guide their research. After students have gathered information about their topics of interest they must complete final products that incorporate what they have learned. Students then must present their final products to an audience. After presentations students reflect on their projects, including the presentations, and evaluate themselves.

Sometimes a group topic is assigned, and students select subtopics on which to focus their research. Middle school students are currently working on “The Amazing Race”. Each student chose a different country to research. Using information they gather about flights to their chosen country, language, currency, locations of landmarks and attractions, culture, food, etc. they will create a “leg of the race” that consists of a series of questions and roadblocks. Each student will run all other students’ legs of the race. The highest score wins at the end of the race. The culminating activity will be a cooking day done in the commons area. Each student will choose a traditional dish of their country that they will make during T.A.R.G.E.T. class.

Elementary students are currently working on independent projects. Topics they have chosen include:

- Magicians’ Tricks
- History of Ghost Towns
- Area 51
- The Iditarod
- NASA

Students go on at least one educational field trip per year. Last year students went to Union Station to see the Dinosaurs Revealed exhibit. They also visited the planetarium and rode the streetcar to the City Market and back to Union Station. Trips in previous years include: the historic Independence wagon tour, Bingham-Waggoner Estate, WWI Museum, Truman Library, the Pompeii Exhibit, Body Worlds Exhibit, the courthouse in Kansas City to observe a criminal trial and a civil case, presentation by NASA astronaut at U.C.M., and Kauffman Center for Performing Arts to hear a presenter from NASA’s propulsion lab.